

Transportation

Transportation is an issue that has vital impacts, both positive and negative, on the vitality and livability of a community. The viability of local businesses and the overall character of the neighborhood are both affected by transportation facilities, often in conflicting ways. As the hub of West Seattle, the Junction's street system is a combination of busy arterials, that provide access to Junction businesses and to through destinations, and quiet residential streets.

In the big picture, West Seattle is a peninsula with an extremely limited number of connections to the rest of the city and the regional highway system. With growth and development in West Seattle and with increasing traffic congestion on the roads to which the West Seattle linkages connect, access to/from West Seattle is becoming increasingly difficult. Congestion and delay on West Seattle's external connections degrades accessibility and mobility for residents and businesses alike. The issue of West Seattle access is being addressed in a separate study in which FOJ is a participant with other West Seattle neighborhoods.

Locally, outreach has shown us that pedestrian and bicycle access and safety is one of the highest priority transportation issues. At the same time, maintaining the capacity of our arterial streets is also important. The Transportation Committee, therefore, identified five areas on which to focus our planning efforts. These include the Junction Commercial Area Access and Circulation, the Fauntleroy Way Corridor, the California Avenue SW Corridor, the 35th Avenue SW Corridor, and Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements. Each of these is discussed below,

Additionally, the desire was frequently expressed for a transit center serving the Junction. Again, FOJ is participating with other West Seattle neighborhoods to study transit service to the entire peninsula. The preliminary recommendations of that study are included in this section,

The Junction's Commercial Area Access/Circulation Program

(SW Edmunds Street-SW Oregon Street, 44th Avenue SW-35th Avenue SW)

The main arterial "spine" of the Junction Commercial Area is the segment of California Avenue SW between SW Edmunds Street and SW Oregon Street. This segment of California Avenue SW serves not only as a main access route into, out of, and within the commercial area, but it also is part of one of the main north-south arterial routes serving West Seattle. California Avenue SW provides the main street linkage to the Admiral Way neighborhood and commercial area to the north and to Morgan Junction to the south.

The California Avenue SW roadway is fairly wide, its cross-section accommodating four traffic lanes with on-street parking on both sides of the street through the commercial area. North and south of the commercial area – i.e., north of SW Oregon Street and south of SW Edmunds Street – the roadway narrows to a single lane in each direction, which introduces traffic operational problems in the transition area. There are traffic signals at SW Edmunds Street, SW Alaska Street, and SW Oregon Street, with a signed, marked pedestrian crosswalk located mid-block between SW Alaska and SW Oregon. The SW Alaska Street intersection has a "walk-all-ways" pedestrian signal phase, and the east and west legs of SW Alaska Street are offset from one another, which create some traffic operations difficulties. The SW Edmunds Street/California Avenue SW intersection has a fifth leg, with Erskine Way connecting to/from the southwest.

On California Avenue SW in the commercial area, superimposition of local commercial area traffic, east-west cross-street traffic, parking maneuvers, and north-south through traffic create serious conflicts and congestion that impedes traffic flow and pedestrian movement,

East-west connections to, from, and through the commercial area include SW Edmunds Street on the south, SW Alaska Street in the middle, and SW Oregon Street on the north, SW Edmunds Street is a two-lane street with an all-way stop east of California Avenue SW at 42nd Avenue SW, East of 41st Avenue SW, SW Edmunds goes steeply downhill to its signalized intersection with Fauntleroy Way. SW Oregon Street also is a two-lane street, with traffic signals at 42nd Avenue SW and at Fauntleroy Way, Alaska Street, however, is a wide four-lane street (with on-street parking on both sides) that serves as the main connection to Fauntleroy Way (and the West Seattle Bridge) for California Avenue SW and the commercial area. The SW Alaska Street/42nd Avenue SW intersection is signalized, and the SW Alaska Street/44th Avenue SW /Glenn Way intersection is controlled by an all-way stop,

Access to the Junction Commercial Area from Fauntleroy Way and from residential areas east of Fauntleroy for pedestrians - and to some extent for vehicular traffic as well - is hampered by heavy traffic volumes and high speeds on Fauntleroy and by unattractive and inadequate pedestrian facilities (crossings, sidewalks, etc.). The prohibited left turn from northbound Fauntleroy Way onto SW Alaska Street also limits access to the commercial area (especially for motorists unfamiliar with the area - like ferry users - who do not know to use California Avenue SW or SW Edmunds Street instead of SW Alaska),

Goal: Improve the Junction Commercial Area access and circulation (SW Edmunds Street- SW Oregon Street, 44th Avenue SW -35th Avenue SW).

Policy: Improve safety and convenience of pedestrian circulation within the commercial area,

Policy: Improve safety and convenience of pedestrian access to/from the commercial area (especially to/from the east).

Policy: Improve vehicular accesses to the commercial area (especially to/from Fauntleroy Way),

Policy: Maintain smooth traffic operations on California Avenue SW through the commercial area for traffic en route to/from the Admiral Way and Morgan Junction commercial areas and residential areas to the north and south,

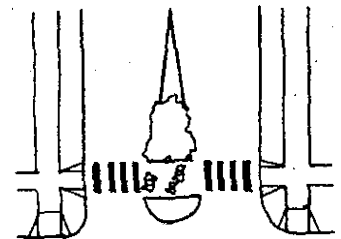
Recommendation: Study the feasibility and best method of reconfiguring California Avenue SW in The Junction commercial area (SW Oregon Street -SW Edmunds Street) to facilitate smooth traffic flow, maximize vehicular accessibility and circulation, and support improved pedestrian safety and convenience,

Recommendation: Study the best methods of facilitating safe and convenient pedestrian circulation in The Junction commercial area. Alternative methods to be studied should include installation of curb bulbs, mid-block refuges and medians, pedestrian signals, a tree-planted median, crosswalks and/or other pedestrian safety devices for crossings at

locations including, but not limited to, the following:

- California Avenue SW / SW Oregon Street intersection
- California Avenue SW mid-block between
- SW Oregon Street and SW Alaska Street
- California Avenue SW / SW Alaska Street intersection
- California Avenue SW / SW Edmunds Street/Erskine Way intersection
- 44th Avenue SW / SW Oregon Street intersection
- 44th Avenue SW / SW Alaska Street/Glen Way intersection
- 42nd Avenue SW / SW Oregon Street intersection
- 42nd Avenue SW / SW Alaska Street intersection
- 42nd Avenue SW / SW Edmunds Street intersection
- 41st Avenue SW / SW Edmunds Street intersection

Recommendation: In the Junction commercial area, coordinate all street and traffic control improvements with recommended streetscape, urban design, and business enhancement recommendations.



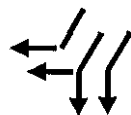
Recommendation: Develop an "Avalon-Fauntleroy-Alaska" Pedestrian Corridor from 35th Avenue SW to California Avenue SW. Facilitate safe and convenient pedestrian circulation through the corridor by improving sidewalks on Avalon Way, Fauntleroy Way, and SW Alaska Street, and by installing curb bulbs, mid-block refuges and medians, pedestrian signals, and/or other pedestrian safety devices for crossings at the Avalon Way/35th Avenue SW, Avalon Way/Fauntleroy Way, and Fauntleroy Way/SW Alaska Street intersections.



Pedestrian refuge island

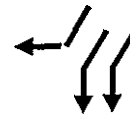
Recommendation: Provide bicycle lane for westbound movement on Avalon Way onto Fauntleroy Way

Recommendation: Modify lane configuration and traffic control at the Fauntleroy Way/ SW Alaska Street intersection



Existing

Proposed



Fauntleroy Way Corridor

(south of SW Edmunds Street)

The Fauntleroy Way corridor is one of the main north-south arterial routes serving West Seattle. The corridor provides arterial access between the West Seattle Junction Neighborhood and the regional highway system (via the West Seattle Bridge), and it serves as the primary access route to/from the Washington State Ferry System's (WSF) Fauntleroy Terminal and its Vashon Island and Southworth (Kitsap County) ferry service.

South of the West Seattle Junction commercial area – i.e., south of SW Edmunds Street – Fauntleroy Way has four travel lanes with on-street parking on both sides of the street. This portion of Fauntleroy Way is designed to support free-flowing traffic operations. There are no traffic signals to control Fauntleroy traffic flow south of the signalized intersection at SW Edmunds Street. (Other than several pedestrian signals at and south of SW Findlay Street in the Morgan Junction Neighborhood, the only traffic signal on Fauntleroy Way between SW Edmunds Street and the Fauntleroy Ferry Terminal is at the California Avenue SW /Fauntleroy Way intersection,

Traffic volumes on Fauntleroy Way can be heavy. Although a large proportion of the traffic flow is neighborhood traffic, the lack of traffic signals on Fauntleroy can allow "platoons" of traffic leaving the ferry¹ to travel north into the West Seattle Junction neighborhood. There is a perception that speeds on Fauntleroy Way are excessive; the roadway configuration and traffic control (i.e., the roadway width and the lack of signals) are significant contributors to any speed problems that exist. All of these factors – roadway width, traffic volume, "platooning", and speed – combine to make pedestrian movement across Fauntleroy Way difficult and dangerous,

In addition to its important traffic-carrying role, Fauntleroy Way must provide safe, convenient crossings for pedestrian movement to/from bus stops, parks, commercial areas and other neighborhood destinations. Lane configuration and traffic control/calming must be designed to serve these conflicting needs.

Goal: Improve the **Fauntleroy Way Corridor**, south of SW Edmunds Street,

Policy: Integrate Fauntleroy Way into the neighborhood physically, aesthetically, and operationally, while maintaining its arterial functions,

Policy: Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and convenience along (and across) the Fauntleroy Way corridor.

Policy: Develop traffic calming and traffic management measures to ensure that Fauntleroy traffic operates at appropriate speeds and that an adequate level of local access/circulation onto and across Fauntleroy Way can be maintained for neighborhood traffic (vehicular and non-motorized). Identify locations for curb bulbs, mid-block refuges and medians, curb ramps, pedestrian signals, and other traffic calming and pedestrian-

¹ It is important to note that the ferry system has a finite, limited capacity to put traffic on Fauntleroy Way. During the busiest 60-minute period, a maximum of four boats dock at Fauntleroy. These boats have a combined total vehicle carrying capacity of 405 cars, and as a result ferry traffic cannot amount to more than 300-400 vehicles per hour on northbound Fauntleroy Way (if the boats are all full and all off-loading traffic continues north on Fauntleroy).

friendly safety devices and crossings.

Recommendation: Evaluate the Fauntleroy Way SW corridor, south of SW Edmunds Street, for opportunities to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety, accessibility, traffic flow, and provide aesthetic landscaping improvements that maintain or improve existing traffic flow.

Recommendation: Analyze traffic volumes (existing and future), delay times, travel times when considering potential new traffic and/or pedestrian signals, and retaining on-street parking and bus zones; consider bicycle lanes.

Recommendation: Improve bus stops and pedestrian crossings by installing painted crosswalks, curb bulbs, pedestrian median refuges, and pedestrian signals as appropriate.

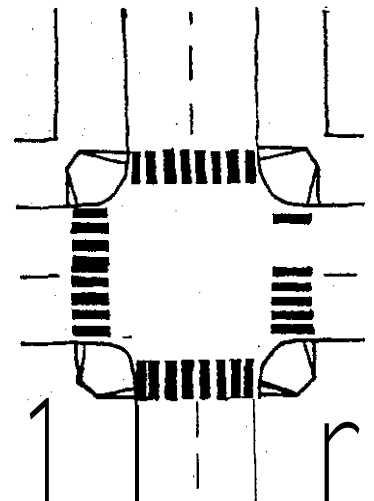
California Avenue SW Corridor Pedestrian Improvements (south of SW Edmunds Street)

The California Avenue SW corridor is one of the main north-south arterial routes serving West Seattle. In the West Seattle Junction neighborhood it has two main roles: to provide access to the West Seattle Junction commercial area, and to provide access to the Morgan Junction and Admiral Way commercial areas. South of SW Edmunds Street the California Avenue SW roadway is fairly wide, its cross-section accommodating three lanes – a travel lane in each direction plus a center two-way left turn lane - plus parking on both sides. There are no traffic signals between SW Edmunds Street and the SW Graham Street intersection in the Morgan Junction Neighborhood, and the only traffic control or pedestrian signage of any kind on this segment of California Avenue are the illuminated pedestrian crossing signs at the unmarked crosswalks at SW Dawson Street and at SW Findlay Street. Periodically heavy traffic volumes and the higher speeds associated with the long unimpeded (i.e., no signals or stops) segment between SW Graham and SW Edmunds combine with the roadway width to make it difficult for pedestrians to cross the street. In addition to its important traffic-carrying role, California Avenue SW must provide safe, convenient crossings for pedestrian movement to/from the shops that line both sides of the street, bus stops, parks, schools, and other neighborhood destinations. Lane configuration and traffic control/calming must be designed to serve these conflicting needs. (Pedestrian convenience and safety in The Junction commercial area north of SW Edmunds Street also is important; these issues are discussed in a separate section.)

Goal: Improve California Avenue SW Corridor pedestrian mobility and access, south of SW Edmunds Street.

Recommendation: Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and convenience along the California Avenue SW corridor identify locations for curb bulbs, mid-block refuges and medians, curb ramps, pedestrian signals, and other pedestrian safety devices and crossings:

- paint crosswalks
- curb bulbs



- pedestrian median refuges
- pedestrian signals

35th Avenue SW Corridor Pedestrian Improvements (south of SW Edmunds Street)

The 35th Avenue SW corridor is one of the main north-south arterial routes serving West Seattle. Its main role is to carry traffic to and from the West Seattle Bridge. The 35th Avenue SW roadway is fairly wide, accommodating four traffic lanes with on-street parking on both sides. There are no traffic signals between SW Edmunds Street and a pedestrian signal at SW Findlay Street in the Morgan Junction Neighborhood. Heavy traffic volumes and high speeds combine with the roadway width to make it difficult for pedestrians to cross the street. In addition to its important traffic-carrying role, 35th Avenue SW must provide safe, convenient crossings for pedestrian movement to/from bus stops, parks, and other neighborhood destinations. Lane configuration and traffic control/calming must be designed to serve these conflicting needs,

Goal: Improve 35th Avenue SW Corridor pedestrian mobility and access, south of SW Edmunds Street.

Recommendation: Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and convenience: identify locations for curb bulbs, mid-block refuges and medians, curb ramps, pedestrian signals, and other pedestrian safety devices and crossings, Improve pedestrian crossings at signalized cross-streets and at bus stops:

- paint crosswalks
- curb bulbs
- pedestrian median refuges
- pedestrian signals

Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements

Walking and bicycling are major forms of transportation in the West Seattle Junction Neighborhood. In addition to the obvious and typical walking and biking trips (e.g., walk to/from the bus stop or the “corner grocery”), significant numbers of people bike to/from downtown and walk or bike to parks and the Puget Sound shore. Improving the safety and convenience of bicycle and pedestrian access and circulation in the neighborhood is a high priority. Recommendations include general and specific traffic signal modifications, street crossing improvements, the provision of bicycle lanes, and the establishment of a new bicycle-pedestrian corridor,

Goal: Improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility and provide safe and convenient opportunities for pedestrian and **bicyclists** to cross arterial streets, access bus stops, and utilize neighborhood businesses and parks,

Policy: Strive to improve safety and convenience of pedestrian connections between bus stops, shopping areas, and residential concentrations

Recommendation: Improve bicycle safety and convenience by

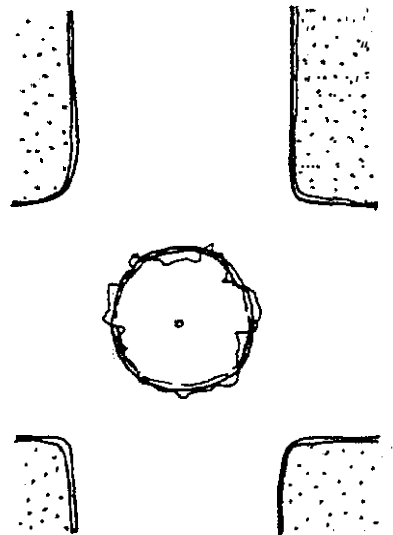
- connecting West Seattle Junction Neighborhood bicycle streets and routes to those in adjoining neighborhoods

- identifying streets that need bicycle lanes
- identifying intersections that need special bicycle treatments

Recommendation: Provide bicycle lanes on Avalon Way to connect West Seattle Junction to the southern terminus of the Harbor Avenue bikeway (at Spokane Street)

Recommendation: Analyze the most appropriate traffic calming devices (traffic circle, stop signs) for the following intersections:

- 47th Avenue SW and SW Dakota Street
- Glenn Way/45th Avenue SW/SW Oregon Street
- 45th Avenue SW and SW Alaska Street
- 45th Avenue SW and SW Edmunds Street
- 37th Avenue SW and SW Dawson Street
- 37th Avenue SW and SW Hudson Street
- 44th Avenue SW and SW Genesee



Traffic circles are one means of calming traffic at intersections. The raised islands may be landscaped if neighbors agree to maintain the plantings.

If an individual or neighborhood proposes installation of a traffic circle, an accident and site analysis will be conducted by the City. The results of the analysis, along with a brochure describing the program, will be sent to the neighborhood.

Public Transportation Facilities and Services

West Seattle relies heavily on transit for access to downtown Seattle and other parts of the City and the region. Transit is a critical element of the transportation system that provides internal and external access and mobility for West Seattle residents, visitors, and businesses. With access to/from West Seattle provided almost exclusively by the heavily-congested West Seattle Bridge, it is critical to the future health and vitality of West Seattle neighborhoods and commercial districts to expand and improve all forms of public transportation. With the finite automobile capacity into and out of West Seattle over-taxed even at current levels of traffic and development, public transportation will need to play an expanded role in serving West Seattle commuters and other travelers if the travel demand generated by comprehensive-plan-specified growth is to be adequately accommodated.

Area-wide recommendations:

The City of Seattle, the Port of Seattle, WSDOT, and Metro should cooperate to provide roadway, intersection, and traffic control improvements that give Regional Express and Metro buses priority to, from, onto, off of, and across the West Seattle Bridge and the Spokane St Viaduct. Such improvements may include:

- add lanes for HOV on the Bridge and the Viaduct
- intersection and ramp queue jump/bypass lanes on Bridge and Viaduct access routes
- traffic signal priority and preemption

Regional Express (RTA) Bus Service

"Regional Express," the express bus division of Sound Transit (RTA) plans to begin operating a number of express bus routes throughout the region in the fall of 1999. One of the Regional Express routes will operate between Sea-Tac Airport and downtown Seattle via Burien, White Center, Fauntleroy, and West Seattle.

- Recognizing the need to make limited stops on this express service, the Regional Express West Seattle route should maximize the connections and access it provides in West Seattle, including transfers with Metro routes and access to the Fauntleroy Ferry Terminal and West Seattle commercial districts.
- The Regional Express West Seattle route should be extended or through-routed via I-90 to the Eastside.

King County Metro Bus Service

Metro should continue to expand service hours and frequency of its West Seattle service. Also, Metro should continue to increase the number of West Seattle, Seattle, and King County origins/destinations served by West Seattle routes.

Transit Hubs, Busway Connections

Several transit "hubs," where multiple bus and rail routes can exchange passengers, should be developed to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and utility of West Seattle transit service:

- A transit hub on Spokane St near I-5 would provide West Seattle buses with direct Eastside

connections, transfers with South Seattle, South King County, and Eastside bus routes inbound and outbound to/from downtown, and a link to the RTA's future Commuter Rail line,

- A transit hub at the west end of the West Seattle Bridge would provide a connection point for Metro and Regional Express bus routes serving various parts of West Seattle (including shuttles/circulators) and for access to the Elliott Bay "Seabus" terminal,
- A transit hub at the West Seattle Junction would provide a connection point for Metro and Regional Express bus routes serving various parts of West Seattle,

In addition to the hubs, direct bus-only ramps connecting the Spokane St Viaduct and the E-3 Busway (to/from the downtown transit tunnel) are needed to improve travel times for West Seattle–downtown transit service,

Elliott Bay "Seabus"

The existing Elliott Bay Water Taxi, begun in 1997, is a summer-season passenger-only ferry service connecting West Seattle and downtown Seattle. The Water Taxi service should be expanded into a permanent year-round system (like Vancouver, BC's Seabus) that is designed to be an integral and important element of the transportation system serving West Seattle. In order to determine the capital and operational requirements of such a system and to guide its incremental development, a long range comprehensive master plan for facilities and services – on both sides of Elliott Bay - should be prepared,

Connections to the West Seattle Seabus terminal should be expanded and improved, Bus service, shuttle/circulator service, a potential tram/funicular system, parking (or lack thereof), and bicycle/pedestrian pathways should be addressed,

Monorail

The so-called "Monorail Initiative" passed by Seattle voters in November, 1997, specified that a predominantly elevated transit system be built within the City. The initiative identified a suggested elevated transit network, which included a line to West Seattle. The Elevated Transit Company (ETC) was formed in February, 1998, to oversee the planning, construction, and operation of the system. The 12-person ETC Council (four each appointed by the Mayor, the City Council President, and the Governor) currently is assessing elevated transit technologies, service concepts (line-haul, feeder, local circulation, etc.), alignments and station locations, and funding sources,

At this stage of elevated transit system development, it is premature to get into detail about specific alignments and station locations in West Seattle. However, there are two key points that are critical at this juncture:

- An Elevated Transit line to West Seattle is needed to provide necessary added capacity in the congested West Seattle Bridge corridor. This additional capacity is needed to support the planned growth and development in West Seattle specified by the Seattle Comprehensive Plan: existing corridor capacity is inadequate for the travel flows generated by existing levels of population/employment, and the Elevated Transit capacity is needed for growth-generated travel increases in the corridor.
- An Elevated Transit line should come at least to the west end of the West Seattle Bridge. A terminus at the west end of the West Seattle Bridge could be interim or permanent; decisions on whether or not to extend the Elevated Transit line, on future extension alignments and station locations, and on feeder connections (bus, van, park-and-ride, etc.) can be made later,